20 YEARS!
1987-2007
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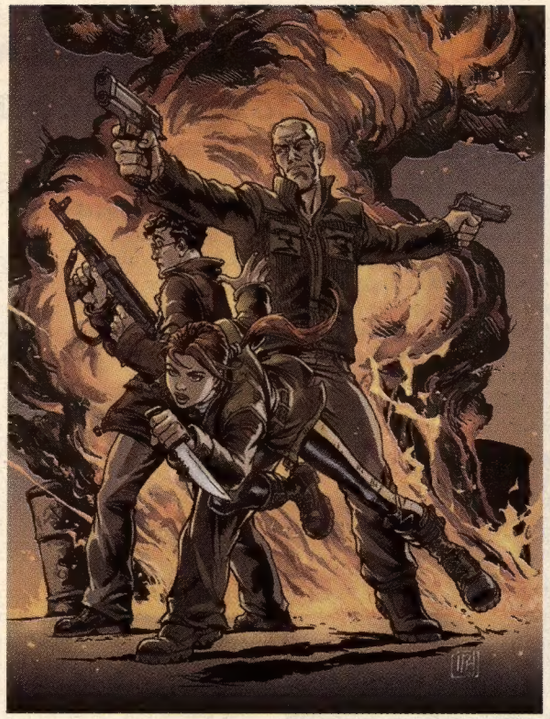
The Circle

The Circle Game

If you based your view of espionage on the exploits of James Bond, you'd be convinced that it's a glamorous, ultra-high-tech, sexy world of intrigue, adventure, and excitement. However, writer *Brian Reed* isn't quite so convinced that espionage is always fun and games...

The Circle, a new creator-owned series from Reed and artist Ian Hosfeld, offers a much more serious look at the world of covert ops. As Reed explained, "The Circle is an international group of freedom fighters that were born in the midst of the Resnigovian civil war in the late 1990's. When the ruthless General Radkovic won control of his country, The Circle was a constant pain in his side. As our series begins, the CIA has tried to kill The Circle's leaders as a favor to Radkovic, who they see as a stabilizing force in the region. The Circle escaped with their lives and went to ground, but now someone is trying to lure them back out into the open in order to finish the job."

Reed offered a rundown of the book's cast. "The leaders of The Circle are Ilona Hadzizec and Ulee Tarvydas, both citizens of Resnigovia (it's in the neighborhood of Serbia and Croatia), who fought in the country's civil war in the late 1990's, attempting to stop a military coup by General Abron Radkovic. Despite the Circle's best efforts, Radkovic won the day, and has declared Ilona and Ulee enemies of the state. Since that time, The Circle has begun to operate internationally, taking on various jobs around the globe to help people in need. Ilona is tracked down by MI6 agent Wallace Christopher—a desk jockey who has never seen field duty, and is now suddenly being shot at, thrown off trains and barely escaping with his life."



The Circle is a high-octane, cinematic sort of comic that avoids deconstructed storytelling in favor of multiple twists and surprises in every issue. "A lot of our pacing in the book came from wanting things to always feel like they were moving and that action was always just a page turn away," Reed said. "Ian and I are always going through the script over and over again as it's put together. He'll come up with an idea of how to liven up a scene I've written, then I'll realize that if we rearrange some panels or pages he's drawn, it will make things move a bit faster. We do this to the point where we both know if we don't stop we'll go insane, and then we call it good."

Did he ever consider developing the story of ***The Circle*** as a summer blockbuster film rather than a comic book? "No—***The Circle*** has been a comic since day one," Reed asserted. "It was originally destined to be a web comic, written and drawn like a daily newspaper strip, then that evolved into a page a week strip, then that became what it is today - twenty-two pages of gorgeous artwork and over-the -top adventure.

"Between you and me, my stomach always rolls a bit when you hear someone say, 'We did this just to make the movie.' If a movie comes of it, then hallelujah, please aim your money gun directly into my wallet—but that's seen by me a wonderful side-effect of the project, not the intended destination."

How'd ***The Circle*** end up at Image, since the rest of Reed's comics work has appeared under the Marvel imprint? "*Jonathan Luna*, of ***Girls*** fame, told me how great it was to work with Image," Reed said. "Once Ian and I decided we didn't want to do ***The Circle*** as a web comic, we knew Image would be our first stop on the shopping circuit."

Is this his only creator-owned project currently in the works? "It's the only one actively hitting the shelves. I've got something else in the stew pot, but it might be awhile until anything comes of it," Reed said.

What led Reed to present such a gritty view of the world of espionage? "We set out to play with a lot of the things we loved about espionage stories, and not all of those are terribly real world. ***Mission: Impossible, The Man From U.N.C.L.E., Modesty Blaise***, and *Ian Fleming's* novel version of James Bond are all things that both Ian and I loved, and it was a playground we wanted to play on. Where any of the real-world vibe comes from is because we snatch little bits and pieces of reality to hang our outlandishness on. The zoo that's mentioned in issue one was something I heard on an NPR report during the beginning stages of the latest Iraq war. Goliath, the missile train that everyone is chasing after in the first arc, is based on a real Russian piece of technology from the Cold War era."

Sounds like Reed is drawing from real-world sources for ***The Circle***. "I have a folder in my browser called **CIRCLE RESEARCH**, and it is full of over a hundred links, any one of which could inspire anything from a line of dialog to an entire arc. I go through the links every few weeks just to get my juices flowing and see what leaps out as wanting to be included in the book."

In this plot-packed series, readers learn a lot about the Circle in the first couple of issues—but are there still more secrets to be revealed? "Oh, there's *plenty* more coming," Reed said. "The first five issues all focus on the relationship between Circle founders Ilona and Ulee, and 'Y,' the CIA agent who almost killed them. As we see that conflict come to a head, we also learn the history of Ulee and Ilona. We see how they met when she was just eleven years old, and he was a young soldier. And at the end of issue five, we find out that there are some things going on with the Circle that... well, let's just say it gets *interesting*."

If it sounds like Reed is working far ahead on this series—well, that's because he is! "The first two issues are completely done as of mid-September," Reed said. "The third issue has just finished lettering, and the coloring is almost done. The fourth issue is nearly finished with pencils. The fifth issue is fully scripted. And the second arc is entering the planning stages. I expect to always be working one arc ahead, and always keeping the book on shelves."

Part of ***The Circle's*** appeal comes from the energetic, stylish art of *Ian Hosfeld*, whose bold, confident linework is sometimes reminiscent of *Howard Chaykin*—although it's never imitative. How'd Reed find such a skilled illustrator? "Ian was a concept artist on the ***Ultimate Spider-Man*** video game. I was writing the cinematics for that game, and Ian was storyboarding them. The longer we worked together in that respect, the more we realized we were just making a comic book, and wouldn't it be fun to do one of our own. ***The Circle*** began as an idea back in 2004, but we neither one had time to sit down and focus on it until just this last spring."

As for those Chaykinesque elements, Hosfeld agrees that "Chaykin is definitely an influence, I discovered him on a Norwegian translation of his controversial revamp of ***The Shadow*** in the 80's, and later with ***Black Kiss***. Besides *Frank Miller*, few people were as bold in storytelling technique as Chaykin at the time. Other influences include *Jim Holdaway* (***Modesty Blaise***) *Katsuhiro Otomo* (***Akira***), and *Jordi Bernet*."

Unlike many artists who can turn out quality work at a snail's pace, Hosfeld is both talented *and* fast. "Ian's nice and quick, and since his line work is so tight, we don't have to worry about having time for an inker to work on his pages," Reed said. "Also, part of our goal from the moment we submitted the book to Image has been to always be ahead of schedule so that the book is never late."

"I'll be dedicated to telling the tales of Ilona and Ulee for the foreseeable future," Hosfeld added, "although I'm not opposed to letting other artists have a quick go if I feel they are suited for the material."

For now, though, Reed and Hosfeld remain firmly at the center of ***The Circle***—although they both hope that readers who have enjoyed Reed's work on ***New Avengers: Illuminati*** and ***Ms. Marvel*** will come 'round to give it a try!

The Circle #1, a $2.99 full-color comic from Image, is slated for mid-November release.

by Cliff Biggers

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

Comic Shop Newsarama

Produced by Comic Shop News in cooperation with Matt Brady and newsarama.com

CSNsider

•***Captain America; The Chosen #1,*** the first issue of the *David Morrell-Mitch Breitweiser* miniseries, has sold out of its first printing; a second printing, featuring a Breitweiser cover image taken from the book's interior, is slated for mid-October release.

•***Grimm's Fairy Tales #s 1, 2, & 3*** are coming back into print in mid-October; Zenescope is adding alternate artwork, sketches, and character designs, along with new cover images, to the reprint editions.

•*Chuck Dixon* has been tapped to return as the writer of ***Robin*** following the "Resurrection of Ra's al Ghul" storyline, while *Peter Tomasi* will do the writing honors on ***Nightwing.***

•Apparently the zombie fever is so strong at Marvel that they're zombifying covers for books that have no zombie storylines whatsoever! The following October-release books are being offered with zombie cover variants: ***She-Hulk 2 #23*** (cover by *Ed McGuinness*), ***Ultimate X-Men #87*** (cover by *Yanick Paquette*), ***Amazing Spider-Girl #13*** (cover by *Arthur Suydam*), ***Punisher War Journal #12*** (cover by *Ariel Olivetti*), ***Wolverine #58*** (cover by *Clint Langley*), ***Howard the Duck #1*** (cover by *Juan Bobillo*), ***Ms. Marvel #20*** (cover by *Aaron Lopresti*), ***Runaways #28*** (cover by *Nic Klein*), and ***Incredible Hulk #111*** (cover by *Leonard Kirk*). These are *not* limited printrun variants, so availability shouldn't be a problem.

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Coming Comics—DC in December

The reintroduction of the original Legion of Super-Heroes continues with ***Action Comics #860's*** third installment of "Superman and the Legion of Super-Heroes" by *Geoff Johns, Gary Frank, & Jonathan Sibal.* Shocked by the reasons for the Legion's disbanding and the state of the United Planets, Superman embarks on a quest to find the one Legionnaire who may hold the key to saving the future: Brainiac 5.

He's the cowboy who just wants to make love, not gunfights—and he's making his return in ***Bat Lash #1,*** the kickoff issue of a six-part series co-written by *Peter Brandvold* and Bat Lash creator *Sergio Aragones,* with art by comics legend *John Severin.* Witness the origin of the most unusual cowboy of them all as young Bat Lash braves a corrupt sheriff and a greedy rancher just to woo a rancher's lovely daughter.

The Gotham Police HQ is taken over by the mysterious Third Batman who begins to kill cops, working his way towards Jim Gordon as he tells his tale and waits for his prize: the life of the Dark Knight, in exchange for the lives of the precinct cops. What dark secret from Batman's past lies behind the creation of the Impostor Batmen? Find out in *Grant Morrison, Tony Daniel, & Jonathan Glapion's* ***Batman #672,*** guest starring Bat-Mite!

New series writer *Sean McKeever* debuts in ***Birds of Prey #113*** with an tale guest-starring Superman!

Charged with the duty of preserving the origins of the world's greatest heroes, Booster Gold attempts to stop the Joker's shooting of Barbara Gordon in ***Booster Gold #5*** by *Geoff Johns, Jeff Katz, Dan Jurgens, & Norm Rapmund.*

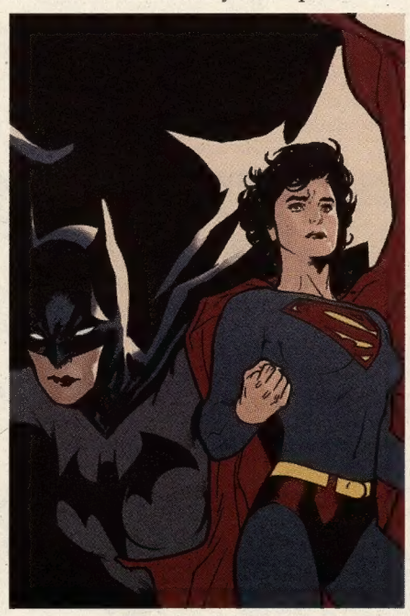
The Book of Destiny's been opened, and oodles of heroes are spinning out, including the Metal Men, the Blackhawks, and the Newsboy Legion. And if that's not enough to pique your interest, *Mark Waid & George Perez* also present the first team-up of the new Atom and Hawkman! in ***Brave & Bold #9.***

Long before World War II, a legendary French spy network was born — and now a kidnapping in Africa has turned the Mademoiselle Marie legacy against its latest standard-bearer, the Black Queen's Knight! See what happens next in ***Checkmate #21*** by *Greg Rucka, Eric Trautmann, & Chris Samnee.*

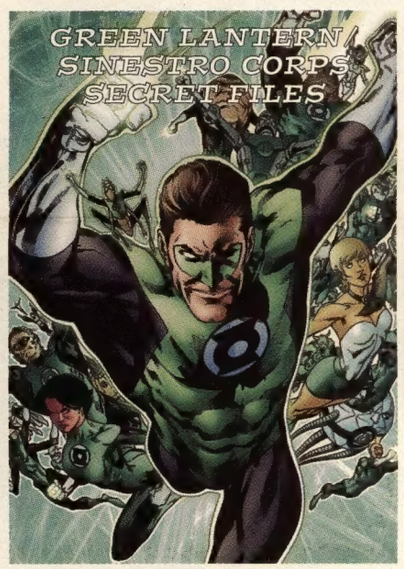
Countdown to Final Crisis continues with the 21-to-18 countdown; in these weekly issues, Karate Kid meets an all-new/old OMAC at the Command D bunker; Jimmy Olsen crosses paths with Mister Miracle; Mary Marvel is taken to Paradise Island; one of the Rogues becomes a real drag; things are changing for the Monitors; and…at long last…Ray Palmer!

Monarch pits heroes against heroes in ***Countdown: Arena,*** a four-issue weekly series by *Keith Champagne, Scott McDaniel, & Andy Owens* that features heroes handpicked from across 52 universes as they confront one another ina battle to the death. ***Red Son, DC—The New Frontier, JSA: Liberty Files, Justice League: The Nail, Tangent...*** these are just some of the worlds that Monarch raids in his quest for the strongest heroes of all.

The quest for the former Atom takes the Challengers to a Soviet-dominated world in ***Countdown Presents the Search for Ray Palmer: Red Son*** by *Alan Burnett & Travel Foreman.* Once there, they team up with freedom fighter Batman against the Soviet President, Superman—and before it's over, they'll have to choose between the life of a friend and the survival of the Multiverse. After that, the Challengers head to a gender-bent world in ***Countdown Presents the Search for Ray Palmer: Superwoman/Batwoman*** by *Jimmy Palmiotti, Justin Gray, & Randy Green.*



Setting the stage for the Green Lanterns' role in the upcoming ***Final Crisis*** comes the first installment of "The Alpha Lanterns," a new story arc written by *Geoff Johns & Mike McKone* that kicks off in ***Green Lantern #26.*** In the aftermath of the Sinestro Corps War, the Green Lanterns are undergoing an unprecedented reconstruction and reinvention, and the controversial Alpha-Lantern project is in full effect. Meanwhile, with Sinestro's true machinations for his war revealed to Earth's prime Green Lanterns, Hal Jordan and John Stewart, debate rages across Oa as lines are drawn and crossed, new bonds are formed, and old ones broken.



Want to know all about the Green Lanterns, Parallax, and other ring-bearing heroes and villains? Then check out ***Green Lantern/Sinestro Corps Secret Files,*** a 64-page oneshot featuring short stories of the past, present, and future of the Corps.

Jakeem Thunder returns in ***Justice Society of America #11*** by *Geoff Johns, Alex Ross, Dale Eaglesham, & Ruy Jose.* The Justice Society reaches out to the next wave of legacy heroes: the new Mr. America, Judomaster, Amazing Man and more! Plus, another face familiar to the ***Kingdom Come*** Superman makes his presence known.

Lightning strikes again as a Flash returns in *Dwayne McDuffie & Joe Benitez's* ***Justice League of America #16***! Where's this Flash from…and what is she doing on our Earth?

Acclaimed comics writer *Jim Shooter* returns to the series that first put him on the map as he joins new artist *Francis Manapul* beginning with ***Legion of Super-Heroes #37.*** Several Legionnaires find themselves in mortal peril as the universe is faced with a frightening and mysterious alien threat.

Plus, in the absence of longtime team captain Cosmic Boy, the Legion seek new leadership, only to find themselves under the the shaky and uncertain control of...Lightning Lad?

Gail Simone, Glen Gold, Michael Golden, Eduardo Risso, and other creators take a look at the femme fatales in Denny Colt's life in ***The Spirit #13,*** a collection of short tales.

Superman faces an army of insect warriors and Lana Lang is missing in the first installment of "Insect Queen" in ***Superman #671*** by *Kurt Busiek, Peter Vale, & Jesus Merino.* It all sets the stage for the debut of an updated take on a classic figure from the past.

In ***Superman/ Batman #44, Heroes'*** *Michael Green* and superstar artist *Shane Davis* launch a six-part saga in which the Man of Steel and the Dark Knight undertake the impossible task of recovering all the Kryptonite on Earth!

Conner, Bart and the other Titans of Tomorrow have planted the seed that will ensure their totalitarian future comes to pass. All that remains is to eliminate those who would oppose them. Watch out, Ravager! Watch out, Supergirl! And most definitely watch out, Blue Beetle! And readers should watch out for ***Teen Titans #54*** by *Sean McKeever, Eddy Barrows, & Rob Hunter.*

Gail Simone, Terry Dodson, & Rachel Dodson reveal new details of Diana's origin in ***Wonder Woman #15.***

DC collected editions (which are advance-solicited and won't be available until January 2008) include:

- ***Batman: False Faces,*** collecting ***Batman #s 588-590, Detective #787, Wonder Woman #s 160-161,*** and ***Batman: Gotham City Secret Files*** written by *Brian K. Vaughan;*
- ***Countdown Special: The Atom 80-Page Giant #s 1 & 2,*** collecting stories from ***Super-Team Family #s 11-12*** and ***#s 13-14,*** respectively;
- ***Doom Patrol Archives Volume Four,*** collecting ***Doom Patrol #s 106-113;***
- ***Green Arrow/Black Canary: The Wedding,*** a hardcover collecting ***Black Canary #s 1-4, The JLA Wedding Special, Black Canary Wedding Planner,*** and ***Green Arrow/Black Canary Wedding Special;***
- ***Green Lantern: The Sinestro Corps War Volume One,*** a hardcover reprinting ***Green Lantern #s 21-22, Green Lantern Corps #s 14-15, & Green Lantern Corps: Sinestro Corps Special #1;***
- ***Infinite Crisis,*** a softcover edition of the landmark miniseries;
- ***Justice League of America Volume 2: The Lightning Saga,*** a hardcover compilation of the "return of Flash" storyline from ***Justice League #s 0 & 8-12*** and ***Justice Society #s 5 & 6;***
- ***JLA: Kid Amazo,*** collecting the *Peter Milligan* tale from ***JLA Classified #s 37-41;***
- ***JLA: The Hypothetical Woman,*** collecting ***JLA Classified #s 16-21;***
- ***JSA Presents Stars & S.T.R.I.P.E. Volume Two,*** collecting #s 0 & 9-14 of the series that launched *Geoff Johns'* career;
- ***Manhunter Volume Four: Unleashed,*** collecting ***Manhunter #s 24-30;***
- ***Outsiders/Checkmate: Checkout,*** collecting ***Checkmate #s 13-15*** and ***Outsiders #s 47-49;***
- ***Shadowpact Volume Two: Cursed,*** collecting ***Shadowpact #s 4 & 9-13;***
- ***Showcase Presents the Brave & Bold Batman Team-Ups Volume Two,*** reprinting tales by *Bob Haney, Dennis O'Neil, Neal Adams, Nick Cardy, Jim Aparo,* and others from ***Brave & Bold #s 88-109;***
- ***Showcase Presents Justice League of America Volume Three,*** reprinting the 1960's ***JLA #s 37-60;***
- ***Showcase Presents Aquaman Volume Two,*** collecting ***Aquaman #s 7-23*** along with tales from ***World's Finest #s 130-133, 135, 137, & 139,*** and ***Brave & Bold #51;***
- ***Showcase Presents Robin, The Boy Wonder Volume One,*** collecting a heaping helping of Robin tales from ***Batman, Detective, Jimmy Olsen, Justice League, Teen Titans, Brave & Bold,*** and ***World's Finest;***
- ***Superman: Redemption,*** collecting ***Superman #s 659 & 666*** and ***Action #s 848-849;***
- ***Superman: Camelot Falls Volume Two,*** collecting ***Superman #s 662-664 & 667-668*** by *Kurt Busiek, Carlos Pacheco, & Jesus Merino;*
- ***Tales of the New Gods,*** an all-star trade paperback collecting classic tales of Scott Free, Darkseid, Orion, and others that includes a never-before-published tale by *Mark Millar, Steve Ditko, & Mick Gray;* and
- ***Tangent Comics Volume Two,*** collecting ***Tangent: Joker, Nightwing, Batman, Secret Six,*** and ***Doom Patrol.***

Coming from CMX/ DC in January

Zombie Fairy Volume One is the first series produced by CMX in collaboration with Flex Comix. *Daisuke Torii's* series begins when a boy brings a family heirloom—a coffin—to a Japanese TV show to determine its worth. Suddenly, a 400-year-old Chinese girl named Chun-Ai pops out of the coffin. Aoto decides he has no choice but to bring her home, where his quirky family agrees to take her in. But they soon find themselves in over their heads as Chun-ai is quickly joined by a friend from the past, and then they find themselves in the middle of a deadly battle with a giant, raging tiger spirit.

Banri Hikada launches a new CMX series, ***Tears of a Lamb,*** in January. Freshman Kei has one thing on her mind: getting into the apartment of Kanzaki, a fellow classmate. She's searching for something she lost there two tenants ago. This strange connection begins a friendship between two students who have each suffered their own separate trauma.

Coming Comics— WildStorm/DC in December

Armageddon continues in ***Stormwatch PHD: Armageddon*** by *Christos Gage & Leandro Fernandez* and ***Wildcats: Armageddon*** by *Christos Gage & Talent Caldwell.* In the former, John Doran is taken to a post-apocalyptic WildStorm Universe by the Wildcats' Void. The horror that's befallen his beloved New York City is devastating...but he'll be even more astonished to see what StormWatch — and Jackson King — have become! Then, readers can enjoy the final chapter of the Armageddon saga as Void takes the Coda warrior Nemesis to the post-apocalyptic future to see what became of the Wildcats.

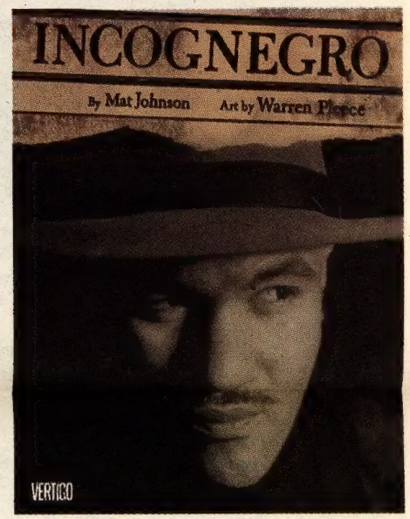
Take a look at some the outstanding visuals that have graced ***Gen13*** in ***WildStorm Fine Arts Spotlight on Gen13,*** featuring art by *Jim Lee, J. Scott Campbell, Adam Hughes,* and others.

WildStorm collected editions (slated for January 2008 release) include:

- ***Grifter & Midnighter,*** collecting the miniseries by *Chuck Dixon & Ryan Benjamin;* and
- ***Wetworks Volume Two,*** collecting ***Wetworks #s 6-12.***

Coming Comics: Vertigo/DC in December

Brian Wood & Davide Gianfelice take readers back into the world of 1000 AD in ***Northlanders,*** an ongoing series that offers a new look at the world of Vikings. ***Northlanders*** tells the epic tale of Sven, an exiled Viking prince who's been living the decadent, high life in Constantinople — the 11th century's answer to Las Vegas — but now must return to the desolate lands of his birth in the frigid islands of the North Sea to reclaim his vast inheritance. Intending only to take his money and run, he finds more than he bargained for as his former family and friends are enslaved at the hands of Gorm, his ruthless uncle. What follows is not only a bloody quest to free his people, but also a young man's struggle to discover where he belongs in a rapidly changing world...and what awful sacrifices it will take to make a Prince into a King.



In ***Incognegro,*** *Mat Johnson & Warren Pleece* focus on a light-skinned black reporter who has passed for a white man in order to do investigative reporting. After his last "incognegro" investigation went bad, Zane PInchback returned to the sanctuary of Harlem—but he'll soon have to return to Mississippi to investigate the arrest of his own brother, charged with the murder of a white woman.

Vertigo collected editions (slated for January 2008 release) include:

- ***Doom Patrol Volume Six: Planet Love,*** collecting more *Grant Morrison* ***Doom Patrol*** tales;
- ***El Diablo,*** collecting the miniseries by *Brian Azzarello & Danijel Zezelj;*
- ***Fight for Tomorrow,*** collecting the miniseries by *Brian Wood, Denys Cowan, & Kent Williams;* and.
- ***Pride of Baghdad,*** a softcover edition of the award-winning *Brian K. Vaughan-Niko Henrichon* graphic novel.

Continued on page 6

THEY'VE SEEN THE FUTURE..
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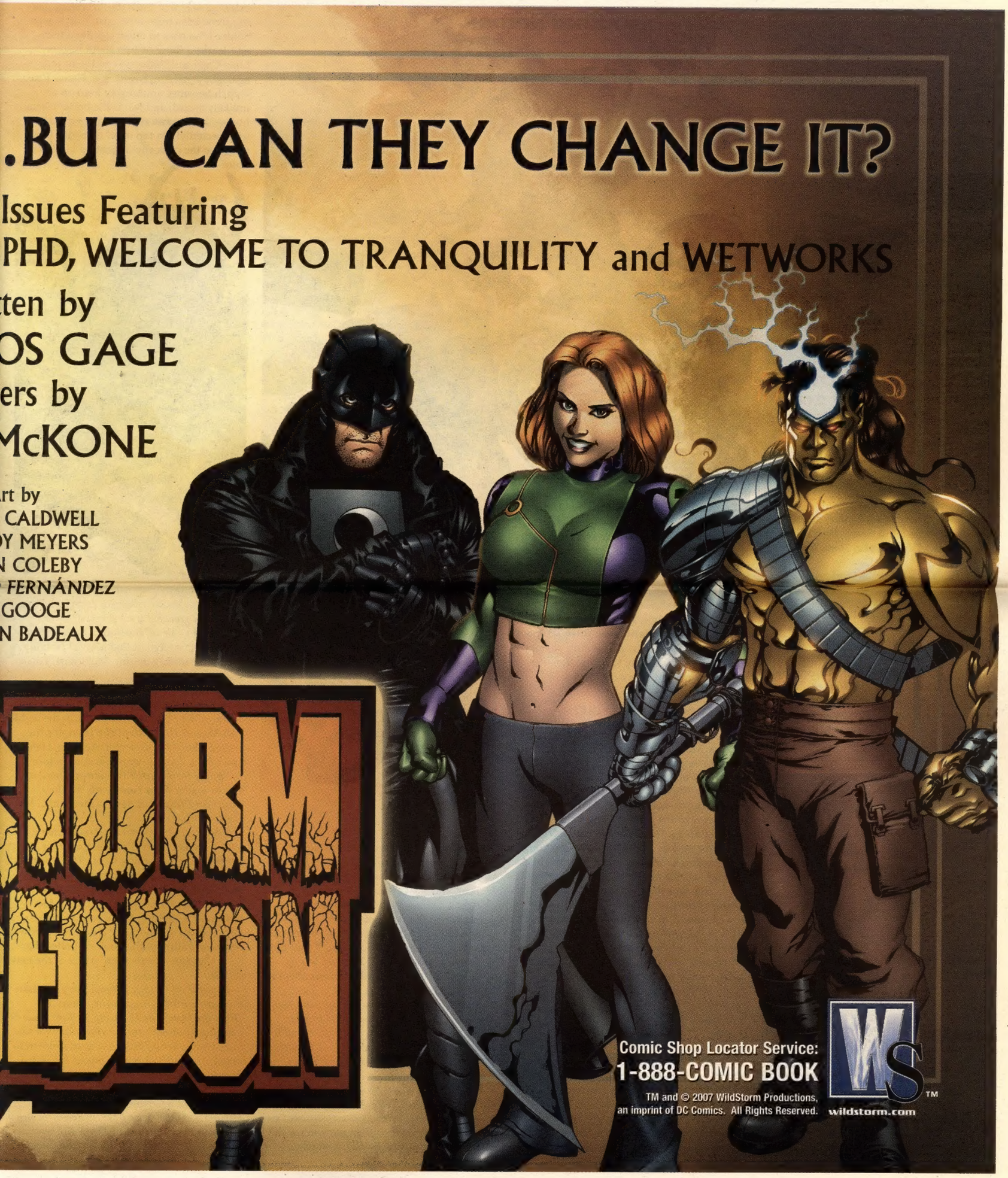
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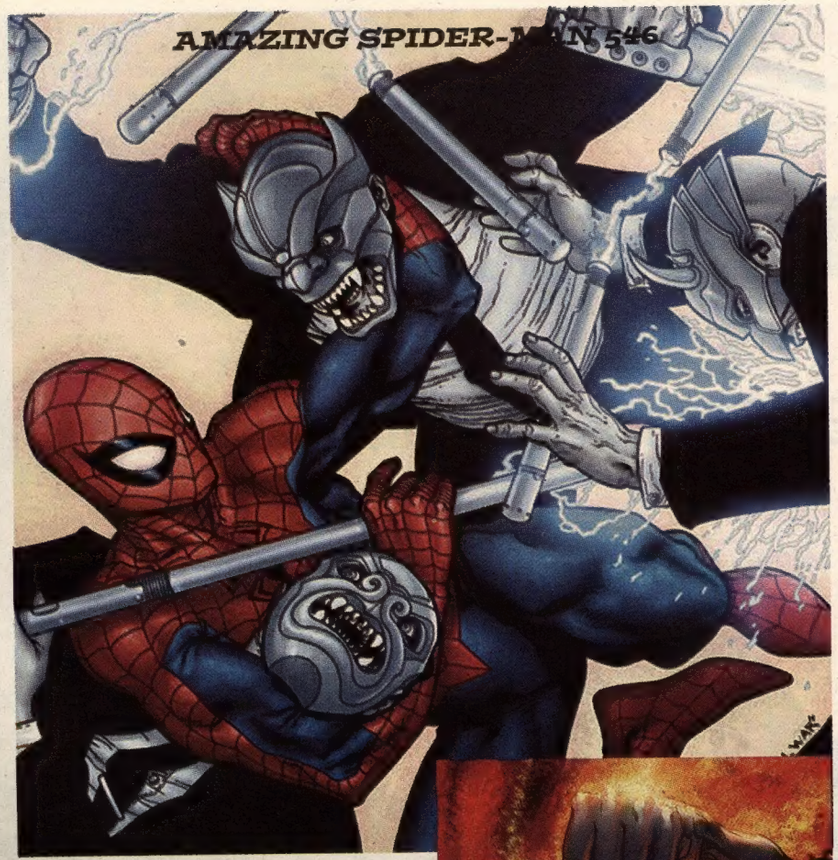
Coming from DC Direct in May 2008

DC Direct kicks off a line of classic confrontation sculptures with *Jonathan Matthews'* ***Batman Vs. The Joker Statue.*** This cold-cast porcelain statue measures 14" tall and is manufactured to order, so let your friendly local comic shop staff know if you're interested!

New Teen Titans Series 2 offers action figures based on the art of *George Perez*. This series includes ***Deathstroke, Terra, Robin,*** and ***Jericho.***

DC Direct returns to the world of the CW series with their ***Smallville Series Two Action Figures,*** featuring some of the costumed guest stars from the hit series. This set includes ***Impulse, Green Arrow, Aquaman, & Cyborg,*** along with the always-popular ***Clark Kent.***

Me am sad to report that DC Direct's next 1:6 scale deluxe offering am ***Bizarro.*** This 13" Deluxe Collector Figure comes clothed in an intricate and authentically detailed fabric costume, dons a "Bizarro #1" medallion, has an extra set of hands, and includes a display stand.



DC Direct's posters for May include ***Justice League of America: Heroes,*** featuring *Alex Ross's* cover painting from ***Justice League of America #12;*** and ***Justice League of America: Villains,*** featuring *Ian Churchill's* cover art from ***Justice League of America #13.***

The *Terry Dodson*-designed line of mini-busts continues with ***Women of the DC Universe Series 2: Batwoman Bust,*** sculpted by *Jim Maddox*. This crime-fighting partner of Batman stands ready to throw the batarang clutched in her fist.

Coming Comics—Marvel in December

"One More Day" is over in December—and that means that it's time for a "Brand New Day" beginning in ***Amazing Spider-Man #546.*** This story arc kicks off the new three-issues-a-month schedule for ***Amazing,*** which is now the *only* ongoing Spidey title. The first arc by *Dan Slott & Steve McNiven* is supplemented by backup features that introduce readers to the new players in the lives of Peter and his family! (And if you missed *Dan Slott's* first shot at Spidey in this spring's Free Comic Book Day giveaway, you can enjoy an expanded version of that book in the ***Spider-Man: Swing Shift Director's Cut One-Shot.)***

Training is almost over for the Avengers cadets. Some will graduate. Some will washout. And, yes, some will die—and you can find out who in "Killed in Action," a four-parter by *Dan Slott & Stefano Caselli* that begins in ***Avengers: The Initiative #8.*** This issue also includes new Marvels, old Marvels, at least one Skrull, and...the Irredeemable Giant-Man?...

The Winter Soldier faces off against Iron Man in ***Captain America #33*** by *Ed Brubaker & Steve Epting*. The man at the top of Bucky's hitlist is finally in his grasp... but Marvel's not saying what happens next!

Weapon Omega takes center stage in ***Marvel Comics Presents #4.*** The anthology issue also includes a new tale of Vanguard, Hellcat, and the Outlaw Kid.

Adios, Exiles! They've left their footprints across the multiverse for a hundred issues, but what threat will make Blink and Co. close up shop for good? You'll find out in ***Exiles #100*** by *Chris Claremont & Tom Grummett*. But what's this we hear about an all ***New Exiles?...***

Tom Beland and the pseudonymous *Juan Doe* (no, really!) join forces on ***Fantastic Four: Isla De La Muerte,*** a one-shot that follows the FF to Puerto Rico, where they face an old enemy and... get ready for it... El Chupacabras.

C.B. Cebulski, Matt Yocum, Daniel Merlin Goodbrey, Douglas Noble, T. Campbell, Scott Gray, Paul Neary, Brian Denham, Nelson, Denis Medri, & Roger Langridge all pitch in for the ***Giant Size Avengers Special,*** a 96-page extravaganza that finds the Avengers sharing some tales from their past; watch as Spider-Man tries to integrate into a team and learns a thing or two about history; Luke Cage and Wolverine go toe-to-toe against a terrifying cosmic foe; Henry Peter Gyrich becomes an unlikely hero on an unlikely world; and Jarvis the butler cleans house...after some robot Vikings drop by unexpectedly! On top of all that—it's the return of the critically-acclaimed Fin Fang Four!

The title says it all: ***The Hulk Vs. Fin Fang Foom,*** a oneshot written by *Peter David* that features a greenskinned slugfest.

Marvel kicks off the holiday season with the appropriately-entitled ***Marvel Holiday Special,*** featuring Spidey, Wolverine, Power Pack, and others.

Roy Thomas & Miguel Angel Sepulveda undertake an odyssey through Greek history as they adapt Homer's first epic in the eight-part ***Marvel Illustrated: The Iliad.*** It's the classic tale of Paris, Hector, Achilles, Helen, and all the rest, presented in comics form!

Spidey teams up with a surprising guest star in ***Spider-Man Family #6,*** as *Chris Eliopoulos* brings him face to face with... Frog Thor!

J. Michael Straczynski & Chris Weston dig up a dozen of Marvel's most forgotten heroes in the upcoming series ***The Twelve***—but you don't have to wait until January to meet some of 'em. ***The Twelve #0*** offers a selection of Golden Age origin tales for Rockman, Laughing Mask, and Phantom Reporter, all of whom are a part of the new series. In addition, the book will offer character sketches and preview pages of the new series.

Orson Scott Card & Pasqual Ferry continue the story of the Ultimate Tony Stark in ***Ultimate Iron Man II #1,*** the kickoff issue of a four-part limited series. When last we saw him, young Tony Stark was nearly blown to bits. How much of him survived his initial Iron Man trial run – and where does the young genius go from here?

"Death of a Goblin!" concludes in ***Ultimate Spider-Man #117,*** courtesy of *Brian Bendis & Stuart Immonen*. This issue features the final battle between Spidey, the Green

Goblin, and the Hobgoblin, as the tragic tale of Peter Parker, Norman Osborn and Harry Osborn comes to a shattering conclusion.

Want to know more about the big events coming up in the Ultimate Universe? Then check out ***Ultimate Marvel,*** which offers advance info on ***Ultimates 3, Ultimate Iron Man II, Ultimate Origins,*** and all the other Ultimate books that'll have readers talking through 2008!

Storm goes solo in ***Ultimate X-Men #89*** by *Robert Kirkman & Tyler Kirkham,* as Storm takes on the sinister Shadow King.

The countdown to the big Ultimate Universe event series ***Ultimatum*** is underway, and the new five-part ***Ultimates 3*** series by *Jeph Loeb & Joe Madureira* helps lay the groundwork for that series. ***Ultimates 3*** picks up a year after the second series—and the first thing that must be determined is who are the Ultimates? After the tumultuous events of the past two volumes, the Ultimates find themselves operating out of Tony Stark's mansion in New York where, no longer working for S.H.I.E.L.D., they have to make it on their own. But, a terrible secret is about to tear them apart and bring about a murder at the mansion!

Readers can enjoy two alternate history twists in ***What If? Civil War.*** In the first tale, readers will learn what would have happened had Captain America led all the heroes against the Registration Act, while the second reveals what might have happened had Iron Man lost the Civil War.

What if Vulcan had become Phoenix? that's the question that *Christopher Yost & Larry Stroman* explore in ***What If?—X-Men: The Rise & Fall of the Shi'Ar Empire.*** *Mike Carey & Scott Kolins* send a blinded Wolverine on a trek through the woods as he struggles to save a vacationing family from an attack by Advanced Idea Mechanics in ***Wolverine: Firebreak,*** a 48-page oneshot.

Humans may not care much for the Warbound, but when something menacing shows up in the New Mexico desert, humans learn that having a savage alien monster or two hanging around might not be so bad after all! See the melee in ***World War Hulk: Warbound,*** a five-parter by *Greg Pak & Leonard Kirk.*

The search for the newest mutant continues in the ongoing "Messiah Complex" saga, which runs through ***Uncanny X-Men #493, X-Factor #26, New X-Men #45,*** and ***X-Men #206.*** Meanwhile, readers can get a look behind the scenes in ***Marvel Spotlight on X-Men: Messiah Complex,*** which features interviews, inside info, and more, and they can enjoy a "who's who" of core characters in ***X-Men: Messiah Complex—Mutant Files.***

Marvel collected editions include:

- ***Criminal Volume Two: Lawless,*** collecting ***Criminal #s 7-12;***
- ***Daredevil: Battling Jack Murdock,*** collecting the four-issue limited series;
- ***Essential Doctor Strange Volume Three,*** a black and white volume reprinting ***Doctor Strange #s 1-29, Annual #1,*** and ***Tomb of Dracula #s 44-45;***
- ***Essential Power Man & Iron Fist Volume One,*** a black and white volume reprinting ***Power Man & Iron Fist #s 50-72 & 74-75*** (rights issues led to the exclusion of #73, a Rom team-up tale);
- ***Fantastic Five: The Final Doom,*** collecting the five-issue Spider-Girl tie-in miniseries;
- ***Fantastic Four Visionaries: John Byrne Volume Eight,*** collecting ***FF #s 287-295;***
- ***Irredeemable Ant-Man Volume Two: Small-Minded,*** collecting #s 7-12;
- ***The Loners: The Secret Lives of Super-Heroes,*** collecting the six-part miniseries;
- ***Marvel Adventures: Fantastic Four Volume Seven,*** collecting ***MA: FF #s 25-28;***
- ***Marvel Adventures Hulk Volume One: Misunderstood Monster,*** collecting ***Marvel Adventures: Hulk #s 1-4;***
- ***Heroes for Hire Volume Three: World War Hulk,*** collecting ***HfH #s 11-15;***
- ***Marvel Masterworks: The Amazing Spider-Man Volume 5,*** available once again in standard and variant editions;
- ***Marvel Masterworks: Golden Age Human Torch Volume Two,*** reprinting ***Human Torch #s 5b-8*** (yes, there were *two* #5's!) by *Carl Burgos, Bill Everett,* and others;
- ***Marvel Masterworks: Rawhide Kid Volume Two,*** collecting ***Rawhide Kid #s 26-35*** by *Stan Lee, Jack Kirby,* and others;
- ***Mighty Avengers Volume One: The Ultron Initiative Premiere HC,*** collecting the kickoff arc by *Brian Bendis & Frank Cho;*
- ***Mystic Arcana HC,*** collecting the oneshots from this summer, along with the who's who handbook;
- ***New Excalibur Volume Three: Battle for Eternity,*** collecting ***New Excalibur #s 16-24;***
- ***New X-Men: Childhood's End Volume Five,*** collecting ***New X-Men #s 37-43;***
- ***Nova Volume One: Annihilation—Conquest,*** collecting ***Nova #s 1-7;***
- ***Power Pack Volume One HC,*** collecting ***Power Pack #s 1-4, Avengers & Power Pack Assemble #s 1-4,*** and ***X-Men & Power Pack #s 1-4;***
- ***Powers: The Definitive Collection Volume Two,*** a bonus-material-enhanced collection of ***Powers #s 12-24;***
- ***Ultimate Fantastic Four Volume Nine: Silver Surfer,*** collecting ***Ultimate FF #s 42-46;***
- ***Ultimate Vision,*** collecting the *Mike Carey-Mark Millar-Brandon Peterson-Jon Romita Jr.* miniseries;
- ***Uncanny X-Men: Extremists,*** collecting ***Uncanny X-Men #s 487-491;***
- ***X-Factor: Heart of Ice Premiere HC,*** collecting ***X-Factor #s 18-24;***
- ***What If? Classic Volume 4,*** collecting ***What If? #s 21-26;***
- ***X-Men: The Complete Onslaught Epic Volume One,*** a hefty trade paperback collecting ***X-Men #s 53-54, Uncanny X-Men #s 334-335, Avengers #s 400-401, Onslaught: X-Men, X-Man #18, X-Force #57, Cable #34,*** and ***Incredible Hulk #s 444;*** and
- ***X-Men: Marauders,*** collecting ***X-Men #s 200-204.***

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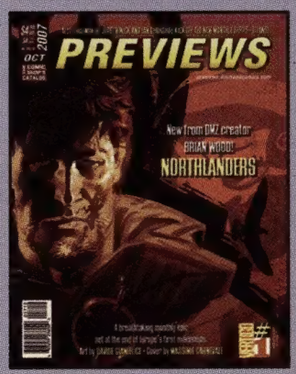
ON THE COVER ...

THE DARKNESS #1—Following in the wake of the hugely successful video game, *The Darkness* returns in a brand new ongoing series by Phil Hester (*Green Arrow*) and Michael Broussard (*Unholy Union*)!



NORTHLANDERS #1—Brian Wood and Davide Gianfelice's *Northlanders* tells the epic tale of Sven, an exiled Viking prince who's been living the decadent, high life in Constantinople — the 11th century's answer to Las Vegas — but who must now return to the desolate lands of his birth in the frigid islands of the North Sea to reclaim his vast inheritance!

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The End League #1—Rick Remender and Matt Broome's **The End League** follows a cast of the last remaining supermen and women as they embark on a desperate journey through a world dominated by evil to locate the one artifact that can save humanity — the Hammer of Thor!

Countdown: Arena #1—*Get ready for this* 4-issue weekly event written by Keith Champagne (JSA), with art by Scott McDaniel and Andy Owens, which pits the DCU's greatest heroes and villains against themselves! Combing the entire Multiverse for the most powerful heroes and villains, the Monarch forces them to battle each other in his Arena, with the victors drafted into his battle against the Monitors!

The Infinite Horizon #1—Image presents this re-imagining of *The Odyssey*: a soldier's long journey home after years in the Middle East, lead across half the globe on a trek fraught with danger, with only the leadership and guidance of "The Captain" to keep them alive.

Amazing Spider-Man #546-548—After the devastatingly heartwarming events of "One More Day," Peter Parker puts the past behind him and sets forth on a "Brand New Day" as *Amazing Spider-Man* will now be published *three times a month*! *Three* times the action! *Three* times the villains! *Three* times the danger!

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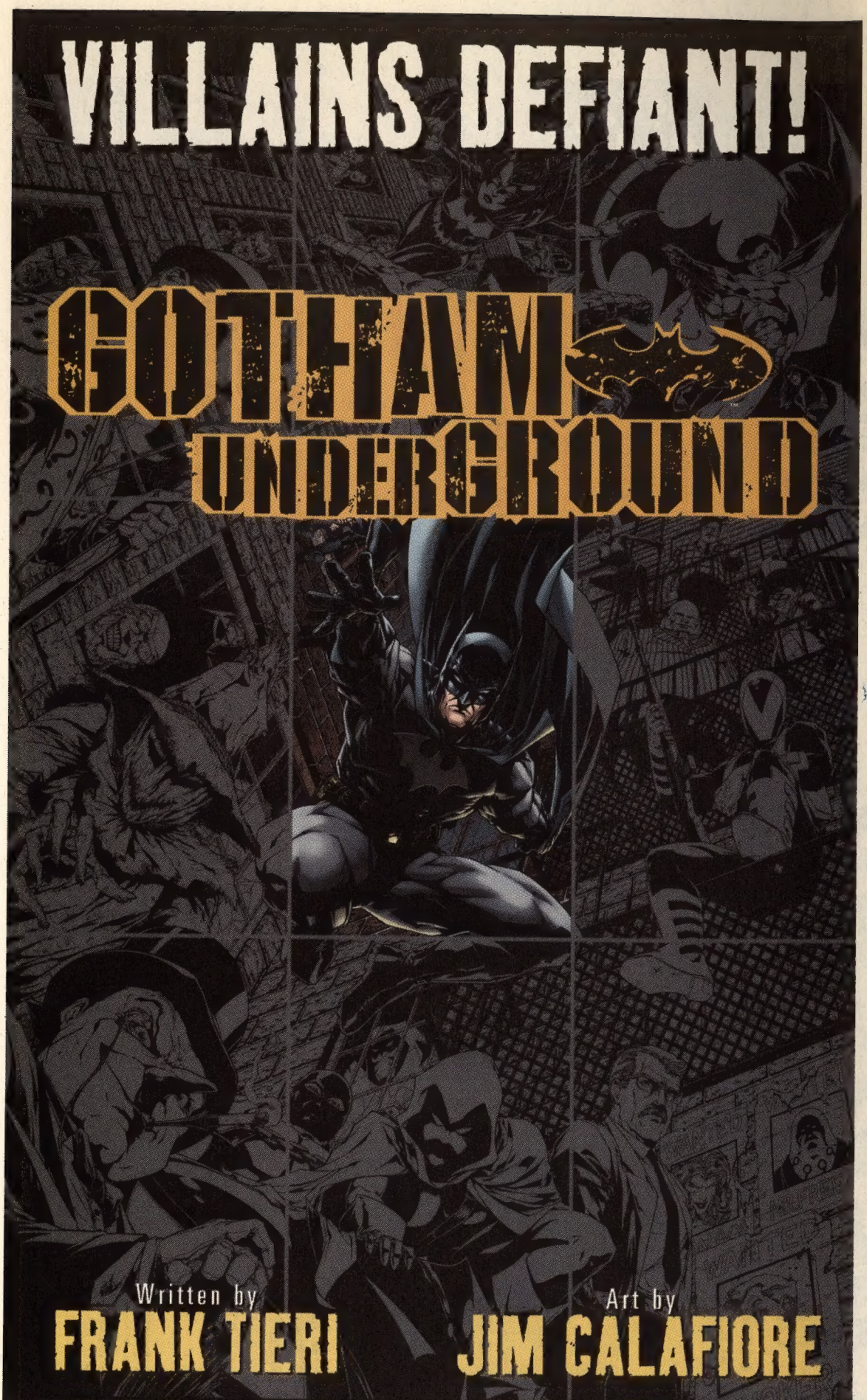

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